

Children & Young People Select Committee

A meeting of Children & Young People Select Committee was held on Wednesday, 13th January, 2016.

Present: Cllr Carol Clark(Chairman), Cllr Tracey Stott(Vice-Chairman), Cllr Elsi Hampton, Cllr Di Hewitt, Cllr Ross Patterson, Cllr Lauriane Povey, Cllr Rachael Proud, Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley, Cllr Sally Ann Watson

Officers: Shaun McLurg (Assistant Director - Children & LAC), Martin Gray (Director of Children's Services), Lynda Brown (Head of Projects -Education/ Early Years), John Doyle (Policy & Procedure Development Manager / Social Worker), Rhona Bolland (Service Manager Specialist Services), Judith Trainer (Team Leader - Scrutiny), Jenna McDonald (Governance Officer)

Also in attendance:

Apologies:

CYP 37/15 Evacuation Procedure

The evacuation procedure was noted.

CYP 38/15 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

CYP 39/15 Minutes for Signature - 11 November 2015

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2015, were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

AGREED that the minutes were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

CYP 40/15 Draft Minutes - 16 December 2015

Consideration was given to the draft minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2015.

During consideration of the draft minutes, Members noted that there had been no adoption breakdowns during 2015/16.

AGREED that the minutes be approved.

CYP 41/15 Case File Audits

The Committee was presented with a report which provided findings of a second themed Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) case file audit which was undertaken in April 2015.

Key points and emerging issues were highlighted together as follows:

- A themed CSE case file audit had been undertaken in October 2014. Nine children's cases were randomly selected for inclusion in the themed audit. It was noted that the nine cases were selected from the Children and Young People who featured at that time on the Vulnerable Exploited Missing Trafficked

(VEMT) list.

- Out of the 9 audits completed, 3 were rated good, 4 required improvement and 2 inadequate.

- The May 2015 report acknowledged that the outcomes from October 2014 audit were not acceptable and therefore, significant improvement was required. Actions which were recommended in order to improve practice were detailed within the report.

- The second themed case file audits undertaken in April 2015, followed a similar process to those undertaken in October 2014. A total of 8 randomly selected cases were audited of children that featured on the VEMT list at that time. 7 of the 8 children were active cases to Children's Social Care (CSC) with the remaining child being active to the Family Support Team following a step down from the assessment teams.

- The overall grading of audits completed in April 2015, revealed 4 good cases and 4 which required improvement. It was noted that in three audits, the chronology was not sufficiently up to date and in another three audits, deemed to be good. In one audit, the chronology was noted to be up to date however the entries were not considered to be focussed enough.

- In relation to Children Seen, none of the audits identified that children were not being seen. One audit identified that there was no increase in visits during the period of VEMT. It was noted that one audit identified that visits were not frequent enough and an auditor concluded that it wasn't clear whether or not the child was being seen alone. Members heard that one auditor commented that there was usually someone else in the house during visits.

- Six audits identified evidence of effective communication and seven audits identified evidence of the child's wishes and feelings being gathered.

- With regard to supervision, it was highlighted that three audits commented that supervision was not challenging or reflective enough while another three audits commented that supervision was reflective.

- Four audits recommended related to evidence of management oversight and four audits mentioned the care plan in a positive light.

- One auditor recommended immediate follow-up, specifically recommending a strategy meeting.

- The results from the CSE audits undertaken in April 2015, evidenced an improvement in practice with no child deemed to be unsafe.

- The recommendations from the previous CSE audit dated May 2015 had now been implemented.

- The difference between those audits deemed as 'Good' and those that 'Require Improvement' was the standard of recording on the RAISE system.

- It was noted that when comparing the CSE audits undertaken in October 2014

and April 2015, there appeared to be a better understanding in terms of the VEMT procedures generally in the April 2015 audit.

- There was no evidence to suggest that Young People had inappropriately been made subject to VEMT.

As a result of the second themed CSE audit, the Committee noted that the following measures would be taken:

- A VEMT Champion was to be identified within each Assessment Team, Fieldwork Team and Permanency Team.

- CSC Team Managers who attended VPG would undertake regular scrutiny of those children and young people who are subject to VEMT in their areas to ensure processes and procedures are being followed appropriately and consistently.

- Members noted that a further themed CSE audit was on-going.

The Committee raised the following points/questions:

- It was asked when results would be published on the on-going CSE audit. In response, Members noted that the audit was due for completion in March 2016 and therefore it was likely that findings would be reported in April 2016.

The Committee was presented with a report which provided an overview and analysis of the findings from the Children's Social Care case file audits completed April - June 2015.

Key points and emerging issues were highlighted together as follows:

- In May and June, a total of 20 cases were selected for audit and 19 completed audits were received. Of the 19 completed audits, 12 had an overall grading of 'Good', 6 'Required Improvement' and 1 'Inadequate'.

- Of the 19 completed audits there were 11 Children in Need cases, 5 Looked After Children cases, 2 Leaving Care cases and 1 Family Support Team case.

- Relating to Children Seen, in two cases, auditors were not convinced that the child was being seen at all and in another two cases found evidence of the child being seen alone. In one case, the auditors could only find evidence of the child being seen alone once. In once case the audits did not find evidence of the child being seen alone and in one case stated that the child was not being seen enough.

- In four cases, case recording was noted to be good and clear however issues were highlighted around one case only having two case recordings entries and one having inappropriate case notes.

- In relation to effective communication, it was noted that one audit specifically mentioned evidence of some reflective discussion and six cases were highlighted as having effective communication.

- Three cases had evidence of the child's wishes and feelings being gathered and two cases could not demonstrate this.
- Members noted that seven audits highlighted that children were being seen, five out of the seven audits highlighted the child was seen alone.
- All nine of the audits carried out highlighted positive case recording with most being clear and appropriate.
- Three cases had clear evidence of the child's wishes and feelings being gathered
- Four audits raised issues with the care plan and three audits found a clear and effective care plan on the case file
- With regard to child seen, seven audits highlighted that the child was being seen, in one case there were attempts to see the child and in one case auditors were not satisfied that the child was being seen

As a result of the findings from the Children's Social Care case file audits completed April - June 2015, it was noted that the following recommendations were accepted for implementation:

- Good practice examples incorporating case notes and supervisions were to be identified by Service Managers and added to the Good Practice Folder.
- The Audit template would be amended to incorporate a section for the auditors to highlight any specific examples of good practice e.g. assessment documents, care plans that could be made anonymous and added to the Good Practice folder.

The Committee raised the following points/questions:

- Members were keen to understand whether it was a requirement for children to be seen alone, in response, it was heard that with the exception of children subject to a Child Protection Plan, it was not a requirement for children to be seen alone
- Concerns were raised around the one case which auditors were not satisfied that the child was being seen. Members were reassured that in this case, the child was seen however, the record of the meeting had not at the audit been finalised.
- Members asked whether an electronic system existed which allowed Social Workers to update records directly onto the system. In response, it was heard that whilst an electronic system was in place, some Social Workers preferred to hand write any notes which would then be passed on for typing. The Committee asked whether Social Workers had access to Laptops, it was noted that laptops were provided however, the electronic management system did not allow electronic working whilst mobile. Members were informed that the aim was to have as many Social Workers as possible typing up notes directly to the electronic management system.

- The Committee requested information on the period between Social Workers seeing a young person and entering notes onto the system. It was noted that there was an expectation that the Social Worker would have all notes on the system by no later than 5 working days after the event. It was noted that resource issues often reflected on the length of time allowed, Members were reassured that additional resources within administration were currently being considered.

- With regard to the input of information onto the electronic management system, Members were keen to understand whether a priority system existed. It was heard that a priority system was in place.

- With regard to statistics reported to the Children and Young People Management Team, the Committee was keen to understand whether any particular trends were identified. It was highlighted that statistics revealed slightly less 'Good', an additional 'Inadequate', less which 'Required work' and two cases almost reached 'Outstanding'.

- It was highlighted that SBC were going out to retender for a new electronic management system.

AGREED that the information be noted.

CYP 42/15 Scrutiny Review of School Organisation and Admission Arrangements (Phase 2)

The Committee received an update on the Scrutiny Review of School Organisation and Admission Arrangements (Phase 2).

Key findings from the review were as follows

- There was an increased demand for primary place across the Borough and there would be an increasing pressure for secondary places

- There were particular socio economic and demographic trends in Ingleby Barwick

- The approach that the local authority took regarding annual consultation on determination of admission arrangements was well received

- There was widespread support for retaining the zone system with a small number of requests to look at individual zones boundaries

- There was little support for a move to feeder primary schools

- There were mixed views on whether the sibling link criteria for secondaries should be revised

- RC schools working practice was around distance and feeder schools

- There was a need for more regular updates on admissions numbers and preferences for schools

- The equal ranking system was not always understood

AGREED that draft recommendations be agreed and that the draft report be considered at the next meeting.

**CYP
43/15** **Review of Children's Centres**

The Committee received an update on the Review of Children's Centres.

Key points were highlighted as follows:

- In 2011, Stockton reviewed the Children's Centre delivery model and management arrangements with associated reductions to the Early Intervention Grant
- In the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) presented to Cabinet in May 2013, Children's Centres were identified and required to make savings on £469,000, these efficiencies were to be made from the budgets for the retained centres
- A further MTFP update to Cabinet in July 2015 included Children's Centres as requiring a comprehensive, Borough-wide review in order to make further savings
- Members were informed of a current National Government Review of Children's Centres across the Borough

AGREED that the information be noted.

**CYP
44/15** **Scrutiny Review of the Stockton Local Safeguarding Children Board(SLSCB)**

The Committee received a Draft Scope and Project plan for the Scrutiny Review of the Stockton Local Safeguarding Children Board (SLSCB).

It was noted that a tripartite meeting was due to take place to discuss the project plan.

AGREED that the scope and project plan be agreed.

**CYP
45/15** **Feedback from Member visits to frontline services.**

The Committee shared experiences of site visits to frontline services. Key points were highlighted:

- Members were taken through processes and case files during site visits
- Sites were referred to by Members as positive environments
- During site visits, Members heard that staff were satisfied with the support which they received from Senior Management. It was highlighted that although there were no current problems, staff were clear on and comfortable with the procedures

- It was noted that members of staff were eager to share their duties with Members and were caring individuals

- Members were pleased to learn that care leavers still visited services after turning 21

AGREED that Members feedback be noted.

**CYP
46/15** **Work Programme**

Members gave consideration to the Work Programme.

AGREED that the Work Programme be noted.

**CYP
47/15** **Chair's Update**

Members noted that the launch of Operation EnCompass would take place on Thursday 14th January 2016.

AGREED that the information be noted.